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Purchase of stores in England.

* 180 Q.—SRI K. KRISHNA RAO: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state in the matter of purchase of stores in England—

(a) the reasons as to why, when stores of the value only of Rs. 23·64 lakhs and Rs. 29·07 lakhs were purchased in 1950–51 and 1951–52, respectively, provision is made for a total purchase in England in 1952–53 for Rs. 162·14 lakhs;

(b) whether orders for stores budgeted for purchase were available only in England and not from any Indian manufacturer in India; and

(c) whether in the case of stores that have inevitably to be purchased from England or other foreign countries quotations from other countries for similar stores of equally good or superior quality are obtained?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:—" (a) The large provision made for the purchase of stores from abroad in 1952 to 1953 as compared with the previous years is mainly due to the large demands made by the Electricity Department (Rs. 118 lakhs) for the purchase of plant and machinery such as synchronous condensers, power transformers, towers. Penstock pipes, hydraulic machinery, generating plant and switch gear for the new Electricity projects, namely Machkund Scheme, Madras Thermal Scheme, Pykara Extensions and Tungabhadra Hydro Electric Scheme and other Schemes which are nearing completion.

" (b) It has been laid down in the Madras Financial Code that preference for making purchases should be given in the following order:—

Firstly, to articles which are produced in India in the form of raw materials, or are manufactured in India from raw materials produced in India;

Secondly, to articles wholly or partially manufactured in India from imported materials;

Thirdly, to articles of foreign manufacture held in stock in India; and

Fourthly, to articles manufactured abroad which need to be specially imported.

The Purchasing Officers of the Government invariably follow this procedure. The items of purchases abroad including those made by the Electricity Department were not available in India or from Indian manufacturers.

" (c) The provision made in the budget under the head 'Charges in England' covers purchases to be made in other foreign countries also. The payments to be made in such

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countries as Switzerland, Belgium, Italy and Poland are made through the High Commissioner for India in London and hence that expenditure is shown as ' Charges in England '. In every case, the order is placed for the best offer on the open tender system taking into account technical superiority of the equipment concerned as well as its cost, irrespective of the country of manufacture.''

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS.

Representation regarding Backward Classes.

55 *Q.*—Sri G. LATCHANNA: Will the Hon. the Minister for Education be pleased to state—

(*a*) the population of each community included in the list of Backward communities in the Madras State;

(*b*) whether any representations were received by the Government requesting for the constitution of a separate Statutory Welfare Board for Backward communities and also stating that funds hitherto allocated by the Government for their welfare are inadequate; and

(*c*) if so, the action taken so far?

A.—(*a*) In the recent census, there was no enumeration in the order of communities and therefore information regarding the total population of each community included in the list of Backward Classes is not available.

(*b*) No representation was received for the constitution of a separate Statutory Welfare Board for Backward Classes. However, representations were received from the Backward Classes League, Madras, that the Backward Classes Advisory Board should be invested with powers to administer the funds made available for the uplift of Backward Classes and that the allotment should be increased.

(*c*) As there is an advisory committee already under existence to advise Government in the matter of advancing the interests of the Backward Classes, the Government consider it unnecessary to constitute any other body with powers to distribute grants, etc.

An additional grant of Rs. 75,000 has since been sanctioned by the Government.

Starvation deaths in the State.

56 *Q.*—Sri S. VEMIAH: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state the number of deaths, if any, on account of starvation in 1951–52 in the State?

A.—Nil.